

The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

By **HALLIE ERMINE RIVES** (Mrs. POST WHEELER)
ILLUSTRATED BY **LAUREN STOUT**
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CHAPTER XXVII.

The Ambush.

Not long after, from the musicians' bower the sound of "Home, Sweet Home," drifted over the poignant rose-scented, and presently the driveway resounded to rolling wheels and the voices of negro drivers, and the house-entrance jostled with groups, muffled in loose carriage-wraps, silken cloaks and light overcoats, calling tired but laughing farewells.

Katharine, on the step, found herself looking into Valiant's eyes. "How can I tell you how much I have enjoyed it all?" she said. "I've stayed till the very last minute—which is something for one's fourth season! And now, goodbye, for we are off tomorrow for Hot Springs."

Her father had long ago betaken himself homeward, and the big three-seated surrey—holding "six comfortable and nine familiar," in the phrase of Lige the coachman—had returned for the rest: Judge Chalmers, the two younger girls and Shirley. Katharine greeted the latter with a charming smile. What more natural than that she should find herself straightway on the rear seat with royalty? The two girls safely disposed in the middle, the judge climbed up beside the driver, who cracked his whip and they were off.

The way was not long, and Katharine had need of dispatch if that revengeful weapon were to be used, which fate had put into her hands. She wasted little time.

"It seems so strange," she said, "to find our host in such surroundings! I can scarcely believe him the same John Valiant I've danced with a hundred times in New York. He's been here such a short while and yet he couldn't possibly be more at home if he'd lived in Virginia always. And you all treat him as if he were quite one of yourselves."

Shirley smiled enchantingly. "Why, yes," she said, "maybe it seems odd to outsiders. But, you see, with us a Valiant is always a Valiant. No matter where he has lived, he's the son of his father and the master of Damory court."

"That's the wonderful part of it. It's so English, somehow," said Shirley. "I never get it. But perhaps it seems so because we have the old houses and the names and think of them, no doubt, the same way."

"What a sad life his father had!" urged Katharine dreamily. "You know all about the duel, of course?"

Shirley shrank imperceptibly now. The subject touched Valiant so closely it seemed almost as if it belonged to him and to her alone—not a thing to be flippantly touched on. "Yes," she said somewhat slowly, "every one here knows of it."

"No doubt it has been almost forgotten," the other continued, "but John's coming must naturally have revamped the old story. What was it about—the quarrel? A love-affair?"

"It's so long ago," murmured Shirley. "I suppose some one could tell if they would."

"Major Bristow, perhaps," conjectured Katharine thoughtfully.

"He was one of the seconds," admitted Shirley unhappily. "But by common consent that side of it wasn't talked of at the time. Men in Virginia have old-fashioned ideas about women."

"Ah, it's fine of them!" paeoned Katharine. "I can imagine the men who knew about that dreadful affair, in their southern chivalry, drawing a cordon of silence about the name of that girl with her broken heart. For if she loved one of the two, it must have been Sassoon—not Valiant, else he would have stayed. How terrible to see one's lover killed in such a way."

It was quickly ended for him, but the poor woman was left to bear it all the years. I fancy she would never wholly get over it, never be able to forget him, though she tried."

Shirley made some reply that was lost in the whirling wheels. The other's words seemed almost an echo of what she herself had been thinking.

"Maybe she married after a while, too. A woman must make a life for herself, you know. If she lives here, it will be sad for her, this opening of the old wound by John's coming. . . . And looking so like his father—"

Katharine paused. There was a kind of exhilaration in this subtle baiting. Shirley stirred uneasily, and in the glimpsing light her face looked troubled. Katharine's voice had touched pathos, and in spite of her distaste of the subject, Shirley had been entering into the feeling of that supposititious woman.

The judge, on the front seat, was telling a low-toned story over his shoulder for the delectation of Nancy and Betty, but Shirley was not listening. Her whole mind was full of what Katharine had been saying. She was picturing to herself this woman, her secret hidden all these years, hearing of John Valiant's coming to Damory court, learning of this likeness, shrinking from sight of it, dreading the painful memory it must thrust upon her.

"Suppose"—Katharine's voice was dreamy—"that she and John met suddenly, without warning. What would she do? Would she say anything? Perhaps she would faint. . . ."

Shirley started violently. Her hands, as they drew her cloak uncertainly about her, began to tremble, as if with cold. Something fell from them to the bottom of the surrey.

Through her chignon fell Katharine noted this with a slow smile. It had been easier than she had thought. She said no more, and the carriage rolled on, to the accompaniment of giggles over the judge's peroration. As it neared the Rosewood lane she leaned toward Shirley.

"You have dropped your fan," said she—and your gloves, too. . . . I might have reached them for you. Why, we are there already. How short the drive has seemed!"

"Don't drive up the lane, Lige," said Shirley, and her voice seemed sharp and strange even to herself. "The wheels would wake mother."

Katharine bade her goodbye with careful sweetness, as the judge bundled her down in his strong friendly arms.

"No," she told him, "don't come with me. It's not a bit necessary. Emmaline will be waiting for me."

He climbed into her vacant place as the girls called their good nights. "We'll all sleep late enough in the morning, I reckon," he said with a laugh, "but it's been a great success!"

Emmaline was crouched in a chair in the hall, a rug thrown over her knees, in open-mouthed slumber. She started up at the touch of Shirley's hand, yawning widely.

"I 'clare to goodness," she muttered, "I was jes' fixin' 't go 't sleep!"

"I—I'm so tired, Emmaline. Take the crown. Its heavy."

The negro woman untangled the glittering points from the meshing hair with careful fingers. "Po' 't chickydee-dee!" she said lovingly.



The Year Was That of the Duel: the Date Was the Day Following the Jessamine Anniversary.

"Reck'n she flop all th' feddahs outer her wings. Gimme that o' tin crown—I like ter lam' it out th' wonder! Come on, now; we go upstairs soft so's not ter 'sturb Mis' Judith."

In the silvery-blue bedroom, she deftly unfastened the hooks of the heavy satin gown and coaxed her mistress to lie on the sofa while she unloosed the masses of waving hair till they lay in a rich surge over the cushion. Then she brought a brush and crouching down beside her, began with long gentle strokes to smooth out the silken threads, talking to her the while in a soft crooning monotone.

Under these ministrations Shirley lay languid and speechless, her eyes closed. The fear that had stricken her heart by turns seemed a cold hand pressing upon its beating and an aigid vapor rising stealthily over it. But her hands were hot and her eyelids burned. Finally she roused herself.

"Thank you, Emmaline," she said in a tired voice, "good night now; I'm going to sleep, and you must go to bed, too."

But alone in the warm wan dark, Shirley lay staring open-eyed at the ceiling. Slowly the terror was seizing upon her, the dread, noiseless and intangible, folding her in the shadow of its numbing wings. Was her mother the one over whom that old duel had been fought? She remembered the cape Jessamines. Was the date of that duel—the death of Sassoon—the anniversary her mother kept?

She sat up in bed, trembling. Then she rose, and opening the door with caution, crept down the stair, sliding her hot hand before her along the cool polished banister. As she passed through the lower hall, a hound on the porch, scenting her, stirred, thumped his tail on the flooring, and whined. Groping her way to the dining-room, she lighted a candle and passed through a corridor into a low-ceilinged chamber employed as a general receptacle—a glorified garret, as Mrs. Dandridge dubbed it.

It showed a strange assemblage! A row of chests, stored with winter clothing, gave forth a clean pungent smell of cedar, and at one side stood an antique spinet and a worn set of horsehair furniture.

Shirley had turned her miserable eyes on a book-shelf along one wall.

The volumes it contained had been her father's, and among them stood a row of tomes taller than their fellows—the bound numbers of a county newspaper, beginning before the war. The back of each was stamped with the year. She was deciphering these faded imprints. "Thirty years ago," she whispered; "yes, here it is."

She set down the candle and dragged out one of the huge leatherbacks. Staggering under the weight, she rested its edge on the table and began feverishly to turn the pages, her eye on the date line. She stopped presently with a quick breath—she had reached May 15th. The year was that of the duel: the date was the day following the Jessamine anniversary. Fearfully her eye overran the columns.

Then suddenly she put her open hand on the page as though to blot out the words, every trace of color stricken from cheek and brow. But the line seemed to glow up through the very flesh: "Died, May 14th; Edward Sassoon, in his twenty-sixth year."

The book slipped to the floor with a crash that echoed through the room. It was true, then! It was Sassoon's death that her mother mourned. The man in whose arms she had stood such a little while ago by the old dial of Damory Court was the son of the man who had killed him!

"Oh, God," she whispered, "just when I was so happy! Oh, mother, mother! You loved him, and your heart broke when he died. It was Valiant who broke it—Valiant—Valiant. His father!"

She slipped down upon the bare floor and crouched there shuddering and agonized, her disheveled hair wet with tears. Was her love to be but the thing of an hour, a single clasp—and then, forever, nothing? His father's deed was not his fault. Yet how could she love a man whose every feature brought a pang to that mother she loved more than herself? So, over and over, the wheel of her thought turned in the same desolate groove, and over and over the paroxysms of grief and longing submerged her.

Noislessly as she had descended, she crept again up the stair. As she passed her mother's door, she paused a moment, and laying her arms out across it, pressed her lips to the dark grain of the wood.

(Continued Next Week.)

HUNDRED, BUT STILL WORKS



Mrs. Nannie Turner, the old lady here pictured, lives at one of the lodges of Cholmondeley castle, Cheshire, England, which has been her home for more than 50 years. Though she is more than a hundred years old, she retains all her faculties and possesses a strength which is remarkable in one of her years. Besides attending to household duties, she makes it her business to go into the woods daily to gather fuel for the fire.

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J. H. Sullivan
Laurens, S. C.

Choice Real Estate for Sale!

40 acres of land, known as part of the Martin Riddle estate, bounded by lands of E. M. Riddle and Mrs. Elmina Owings. Price \$10 per acre.

2-3-4 acres, known as Duckett house and lot, bounded by T. D. Lake and road leading to Madden station; 1-2 mile of the city limits of Laurens. Price \$600.

20 acres of land, known as part of the Martin Riddle estate, bounded by lands of E. M. Riddle and others. Price \$30 per acre.

25 acres of land known as B. R. Todd's home, bounded by lands of S. H. Burton, E. R. Traynham and Mrs. Rosa Lee Craddock. This is a beautiful home at Narnie, station on C. & W. C. railroad, 5 miles from Laurens. This home was built and improved in 1913. Price \$2,750. Why not buy this today?

100-2-3 acres, known as the Harris Riddle home, with eleven room dwelling, fine barn and good outbuildings. Price \$30 per acre.

218 acres, more or less, known as O. L. Hunter home, bounded by Warrior creek, M. H. Hunter, W. J. Fleming and others, with six room dwelling and four tenant houses, well improved. Price \$9,000.

178 acres of land near Ora, bounded by lands of Tom Poole, William Bryson and others, with good improvements, will be sold very, very low.

40 acres, more or less, known as W. R. Power's home, bounded by T. B. Taylor, R. L. Smith and others, five room cottage, for \$1,200.

41-2 acres, known as M. B. Burns' home, bounded by A. B. Burns, S. J. Burns and Jim Nabors. Price \$1,660.

240 acres, more or less, known as the Mat Owings place, bounded by W. R. Cheek, C. B. Martin and others. Dwelling and other outbuildings. This is the property of Mrs. Jane Owings, who has a life-time estate and will be sold at her interest at \$1,500 cash.

51-3-4 acres known as P. H. Owen's home, bounded by Mrs. Jane Curry, N. D. Garrett and others. Six-room cottage, barn and outbuildings and one tenant house. Price \$40 per acre. Terms 1-3 cash, remainder in one and two years.

53 acres, more or less, known as Holcomb place, bounded by Butler Garrett, J. R. Holcomb and others, with four room dwelling and outbuildings. Price \$60.

13-4 acres, more or less, known as E. R. Blakeley home, bounded by Y. C. Hellams, J. J. Dendy and fronting Church street. Eight room cottage and outbuilding, city water, with lights. Fine pasture. Price \$2,560.

20 acres of land inside incorporate limits of city of Laurens, with six room cottage, three room house and outbuilding, for \$2,500.

Two store rooms, at Watts Mill, fronting 50 feet and 50 feet deep. Price \$1,550.

3-4 acre of land, bounded by Jeff Sexton, Will Blakeley, and others on Mock Street, in city of Laurens; has six room dwelling, for the small sum of \$900.

3-4 acre more or less, known as A. B. Burns home, in the city of Laurens, bounded by Boyd Sexton, Geo. Garrett and fronting on North Harper street, with seven room dwelling, outbuilding and fine well of water. This home has been recently built in fine location and can be bought for \$3,200, one third cash, balance in one and two years.

15 acres, more or less, known as the H. L. McSwain home place in Cross Hill, with a beautiful 8-room cottage. See me for prices.

1-4 acres with six-room dwelling, two barns, and other outbuildings at the Watts Mill. Price \$1,800.00.

88 acres, known as P. O. Smith's home, bounded by S. A. Williams, Chesterfield McDaniel and others. Price \$37.50 per acre.

These are a few of the bargains that we have to offer you at the present. If you want a home or want to dispose of a home call me up at Gray Court, S. C., Phone 19.

30 acres of land, more or less, known as part of the Mrs. Nan Knight homestead. Bounded by S. P. Ball, Mrs. Sallie Hughes, L. Z. Wilson and others. With dwelling and outbuilding. Price \$50 per acre.

50 acres of land bounded by public highway running from Laurens to Greenville, known as the Barksdale land, just outside corporate limits of the city of Laurens. Price \$75.00 per acre.

Also lot adjoining this lot, 62 acres, at \$50.00 per acre.

117-1-2 acres bounded by lands of C. A. Babb, L. E. Mares and the Abercrombie estate. Has nice dwelling, good outbuilding, and farm lands in the highest state of cultivation. Price \$50.00 per acre.

67 acres of land just outside corporate limits of Gray Court, in high state of cultivation. Has tenant house and is very near the Gray Court-Owings Institute. This property is cheap at the price, \$50.00 per acre.

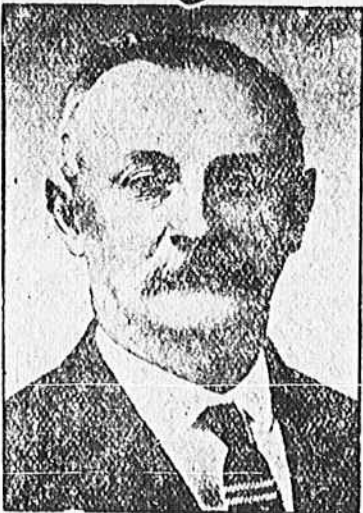
140-1-2 acres known as the Reuben Martin homestead, situated on the highway from Lanford to Gray Court. This is one of the finest locations in the upper part of the county, close to schools, close to church and close to market. Price \$45.00 per acre.

2 acres, more or less, known as S. T. Taylor's place, bounded by North Harper street, Watts Mills property; five room dwelling, storeroom 25x50 feet, with barn and fine well of water. Can be connected with water works. Electric lights already installed. Price \$3,200.

63 acres of land, more or less, known as the G. J. Lanford lands, bounded by the lands of J. O. Garrett, H. P. Burdette and others. Price \$60.00 per acre.

54-1-2 acres, known as the Gilly F. Riddle home place, bounded by Charlie Benson, H. P. Garrett and Little brothers. Price \$37.50 per acre.

40-1-3 acres, more or less, known as J. D. Graydon home, bounded by J. M. Armstrong, W. B. Abercrombie and others with cottage and outbuildings. Price \$45 per acre.



Up-to-date bakery at very reasonable price and terms made easy. See me early if you want this property.

13-4 acres of land known as the B. W. Patton home at Watts Mill, with a beautiful cottage and a store-room. Price \$2,700.00.

Also three unimproved lots at the Watts Mill will be sold remarkably cheap. See me for price.

93 acres of land, known as part of the Mrs. Anne Cheek homestead, bounded by W. R. Cheek, Geo. Smith W. R. Henderson and others. Has dwelling and outbuilding. Convenient to school and church. Price \$35 per acre.

169 acres, known as Mr. Albert B. Burns' home, bounded by Sam Burns, Mac Burns and Robert Fleming. This is a nice piece of property, nicely located and good improvements. Cheap at \$45 per acre.

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- (1) The Glenn Place one mile of Greenville and Laurens Road containing 236 acres.
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- (8) The Bill Armstrong Place containing 65 acres.
- (9) The Mitchell Place at Barksdale on Greenville and Laurens Road containing 126 and 1-2 acres.

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House and lot of Anna C. West and known as the C. C. Featherstone Place on West Main Street in city of Laurens.
The A. J. Taylor house and lot on East Main Street.
S. S. Boyd Place on East Main Street.
One house and lot in town of Gray Court.
Thad. Nelson house and lot on West Hampton Street.
Four Hundred acres five miles of Whitmire, known as the Mars Place.
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Two Hundred acres, bounded by lands of T. M. Shaw home-place, known as Motte Place.
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One Hundred and Forty-six Acres near Trinity Ridge School at a Bargain.
One house and several lots between City of Laurens and Watts Mill.
One Hundred Acres near Ora, Bramlette Place, at Twenty-three Hundred (\$2,300.00) Dollars.
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